

Raccoon State Recreation Area

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Interpretive programs have concluded for the summer.
Please join us for the following special events.

Historic Mansfield Roller Mill

National Milling Day	September 7
Cornbread Festival	September 13 & 14
Covered Bridge Festival	October 10-19
Christmas Festival	December 5, 6, & 7

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Environmental Good Turn Day	September 27
Trapper Education	October 25
Halloween Camping Weekend	October 24, 25 & 26

For more information about these events, either stop by
the property office or call 765-344-1412

How do leaves change color?

Ah, crisp autumn days. As you stroll through the park, do you wonder how leaves change color? It all begins when the days become shorter and cooler. This triggers a process in trees that cause them to go into dormancy – winter sleep.

During the spring and summer, the leaves are green because of a chemical or pigment, called chlorophyll. This pigment takes sunlight, water and carbon dioxide and converts it into sugars, food for the tree. When a tree prepares for dormancy, it stops making chlorophyll and the existing chlorophyll starts breaking down.

As the chlorophyll fades away, the colors yellow, orange and brown appear. This is the result of another pigment, carotenoid, which was always present, but was masked by the green of the chlorophyll. Anthocyanin, also a pigment, gives trees leaves those red and purple colors. Unlike carotenoids, anthocyanins are not always present; instead they are produced late in the summer when phosphate moves out of the leaves. This phosphate movement changes the breakdown of sugar in bright light so that anthocyanins form. The warmer the day, the more sugars produced and thus more brilliant red and purple colors.